

# NOAA Alaska Stakeholder Forum Summary

February 5, 2009  
Anchorage, Alaska



# Background

- NOAA held a stakeholder forum to gain input for the new Administration and a new strategic plan



- The forum was held in conjunction with the Alaska Forum on the Environment and the Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Advisory Group meetings
- Participants were asked to provide input on four questions (see next slide)

# Background

Participants were asked:



- What drivers, forces, and/ or scenarios do you use in your long term planning?
- What are the opportunities for your organization/ community?
- What are the threats for your organization/ community?
- What roles/activities should the federal government (e.g. NOAA) have in the future?



# Participant Input



- The following slides highlight the common themes heard from the participants

# Messages Heard – Drivers/Scenarios for Planning

*“Alaska is one of the few regions where we depend on weather forecasts for life and survival. Weather dictates all of our actions.”*

- Key question: Will climate change be dramatic or gradual?
- Opening of the Arctic (commerce, governance)
- Subsistence needs
- Energy costs
- Moving / changing fisheries resources
- Physical changes:
  - Melting/warming permafrost, Frequent and intense storms (debris flow, avalanche, floods), Coastal erosion, Sea level rise, Increasing temperatures, Potential health impacts (airborne and water diseases)



# Messages Heard - Opportunities

*All members seem to either directly or indirectly focus on ways to sustain a viable economic community (particularly rural) as the climate change impacts begin.*

- Work Together!
  - Create new partnership with Government, NGOs, private sector to chart a new course
- Connect with and involve communities
  - Take in their local knowledge (particularly traditional ecological knowledge)
  - Provide information they can use
- Create a baseline of data and develop novel technologies (e.g. observing, alternative energy)



# Messages Heard – Threats

*There is an underlying sense of an impending and fundamental change of lifestyle... and a corresponding call for science to be a steadying force through the transition*

- Ensuring we are not trading one problem for another
- Lack of workers trained in science and technology fields. Current experts retiring.
- Many communities digging deeper, but bumping into regulations and barriers
- Health impacts of a changing climate
- Failure to recognize change by our political system and interest groups refusal to change and let go of their old interest in light of new challenges



# Messages Heard – Role for NOAA

*Participants agreed that NOAA should build a reputation as a reliable source of scientific and climate data. NOAA should avoid ideological advocacy.*

- Be the science leader in climate change and the Arctic
  - Coordinate and leverage efforts at all levels
  - Baseline observations and data were stressed over and over; monitoring, prediction, and projection also expected in the context of...
  - Improve knowledge and understanding of linkages between land, atmosphere and the ocean to help in providing critical information to decision makers
  - Contribute to international / Arctic governance
  - Provide information to support alternative energy (wind, tidal, and wave energy )
- Connect with communities and develop a public network approach to regional problems



# Messages Heard - Summary

Overall the message we heard was:

- NOAA observations and data are deemed critical by a broad array of users
- NOAA should
  - Focus on being a science agency
  - Engage more with communities
  - Take a greater leadership role in climate and health
  - Take international leadership in the Arctic
  - Support shipping, fishing, and alternative energy
  - Utilize / incorporate traditional ecological knowledge in its science
- There is a sense that a fundamental a change of lifestyle is on the horizon



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